

## Response to The GP Workforce Pipeline:

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Word count: 350

It was insightful to read about increasing the flow and plugging the leaks for *The GP workforce pipeline*<sup>1</sup>. The initial stage of GP recruitment was stated to be during medical school but our experience of widening participation has made it start earlier. The *Selecting for Excellence Final Report*<sup>2</sup> highlights the need for medical schools to support students from widening participation backgrounds, the key role of doctors in widening participation and how they can be supported. The School of Medicine, Keele University, this year arranged for visits for 17 local college students from widening participation backgrounds to spend a day in General Practice. This was one of their five core days of the Steps2Medicine scheme arranged by the School of Medicine. All students on the scheme with suitable exam grades are given a guaranteed interview at Keele.

The students were given a list of 20 specific tasks to complete during 'My day in General Practice.' These included listening to heart and lung sounds, taking a pulse and watching a procedure such as venepuncture or an intramuscular injection. Students were encouraged to spend time with a GP, practice nurse and at reception. We asked students for verbal and written feedback, which was almost entirely incredibly positive. Comments included '*Dr x is a huge role model*', '*it (General Practice) is an incredibly rewarding and diverse job*', '*It's really interesting and varied and has increased my interest in the possibility of going into the job*', '*I loved the GP visit and it was an amazing experience which made me 100% sure that I want to go into medicine*.' And what did the GPs who took part think? '*Brilliant*,' '*truly inspiring*' and one GP commented that a student had said '*this has been the best day of my life!*'

We believe that such student visits could a solution to the workforce issue by encouraging and inspiring local students from any background, not just widening participations backgrounds, to enter a career in General Practice. And we may well have also stumbled upon a way of improving GP retention, by reminding GPs just how inspirational they are!

1. Spooner S, Fletcher E, Anderson A, Campbell JL. Br J Gen Pract 2018; 68 (670): 245-246. DOI: 10.3399/bjgp18X696125
2. Selecting for Excellence Executive Group. Selecting for Excellence Final Report. [Internet] 2017. [cited 04/05/18]. Available from <https://www.medschools.ac.uk/media/1203/selecting-for-excellence-final-report.pdf>